

**Testimony in Support of S.B. 284: An Act Increasing the Age from Eight to Eighteen Years for an
Income-Eligible Person to Obtain Medical Assistance Regardless of Immigration Status**
Submitted by Margaret Blume

Thank you esteemed members of the Human Services Committee for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of S.B. 284: An Act Increasing the Age from Eight to Eighteen Years for an Income-Eligible Person to Obtain Medical Assistance Regardless of Immigration Status.

My name is Margaret Blume. I am a resident of Cheshire and a graduating Policy Practice Social Work student at the University of Connecticut. I stand in support of S.B. 284 because healthcare is a human right, and we all deserve access to the medical services we need to live to live our healthiest lives. Disease and illness do not recognize national borders, the right to freedom from disease does not recognize national borders, and we must continue to take the necessary steps to ensure that our state actualizes the right of health for all our residents.

Last year, Connecticut took the important step of expanding assess to HUSKY to all income-eligible children up to 8 years old. This action is laudable, but it does not go far enough. As children turn 9 years old, they and their families must now grapple with the concerns of how they will afford school physicals, what will happen if their child becomes sick, or if they will be forced into medical debt to save their child from a medical emergency. This conundrum forces parents to make impossible decisions between paying for necessary medical services and other necessities like food, rent, and utilities.

When children are insured, they are more likely to receive necessary medical and behavioral health care, they are more likely to graduate from high school and college, have higher incomes as adults, and have better health outcomes as adults.ⁱ Providing access to HUSKY for the child's entire childhood, therefore, saves costs in the long run.

Connecticut must also take action to expand HUSKY to all income-eligible adults, regardless of immigration status. Research consistently shows that children are more likely to be insured and have annual well-child visits when their parents are also insured. Research also shows that when parents and adults are insured, their physical and behavioral health improve.ⁱ Immigrants support Connecticut through taxes and in the workforceⁱⁱ and Connecticut has the responsibility to support immigrants in return.

Access to healthcare is a human right. All people deserve the right to freedom from disease. I urge you to support S.B. 284 to expand HUSKY to all income-eligible children regardless of immigration status and to create a long-term solution moving forward so that all Connecticut residents who are income-eligible, regardless of age or immigration status have HUSKY access. Thank you.

ⁱ Schubel, J. (2021, June 14). *Expanding Medicaid for parents improves coverage and health for both parents and children*. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

ⁱⁱ American Immigration Council. (2020, August 6). *Immigrants in Connecticut*.

<https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/immigrants-connecticut#:~:text=Immigrants%20in%20Connecticut%20have%20contributed,and%20local%20taxes%20in%202018.>